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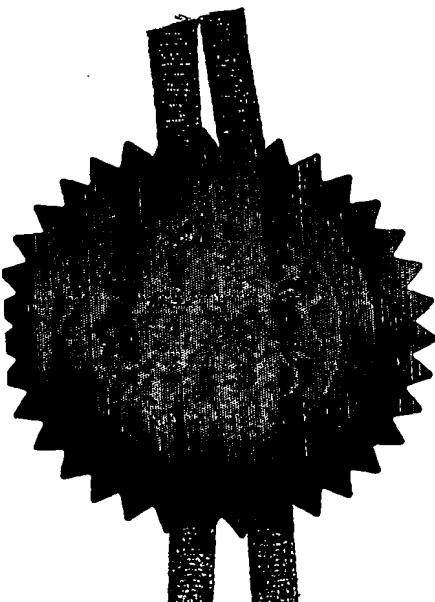
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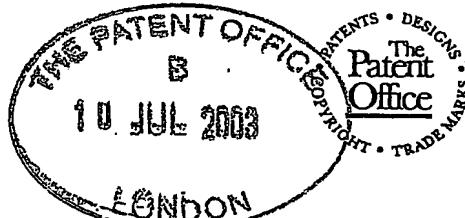
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N.89158 CHM

11 JUL 03 EB21822-10 D00192

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0316221.1

P01/7700 0.00-0316221.1

3. Full name, address and postcode of the or of each applicant (*underline all surnames*)
 OCULTY LIMITED  
1 YEFTLY DRIVE  
OXFORD OX4 4XS  
UNITED KINGDOM
Patents ADP number (*if you know it*)

8203622001

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4. Title of the invention

PIXEL ARRANGEMENT FOR AN AUTOSTEREOSCOPIC DISPLAY APPARATUS

5. Name of your agent (*if you have one*)

J.A. KEMP &amp; CO.

 "Address for service" in the United Kingdom  
to which all correspondence should be sent  
(*including the postcode*)

 14 South Square  
Gray's Inn  
London  
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Pixel Arrangement For An Autostereoscopic Display Apparatus

The present invention relates to an autostereoscopic display apparatus. Such an apparatus may be used in a switchable two dimensional (2D)/three dimensional (3D) autostereoscopic display apparatus. Such systems may be used in computer monitors, telecommunications handsets, digital cameras, laptop and desktop computers, games apparatuses, automotive and other mobile display applications.

Normal human vision is stereoscopic, that is each eye sees a slightly different image of the world. The brain fuses the two images (referred to as the stereo pair) to give the sensation of depth. Three dimensional stereoscopic displays replay a separate, generally planar, image to each of the eyes corresponding to that which would be seen if viewing a real world scene. The brain again fuses the stereo pair to give the appearance of depth in the image.

Fig. 1a shows in plan view a display surface in a display plane 1. A right eye 2 views a right eye homologous image point 3 on the display plane and a left eye 4 views a left eye homologous point 5 on the display plane to produce an apparent image point 6 perceived by the user behind the screen plane.

Fig. 1b shows in plan view a display surface in a display plane 1. A right eye 2 views a right eye homologous image point 7 on the display plane and a left eye 4 views a left eye homologous point 8 on the display plane to produce an apparent image point 9 in front of the screen plane.

Fig. 1c shows the appearance of the left eye image 10 and right eye image 11. The homologous point 5 in the left eye image 10 is positioned on a reference line 12. The corresponding homologous point 3 in the right eye image 11 is at a different relative position 3 with respect to the reference line 12. The separation 13 of the point 3 from the reference line 12 is called the disparity and in this case is a positive disparity for points which will lie behind the screen plane.

For a generalised point in the scene there is a corresponding point in each image of the stereo pair as shown in Fig. 1a. These points are termed the homologous points. The relative separation of the homologous points between the two images is termed the disparity; points with zero disparity correspond to points at the depth

plane of the display. Fig. 1b shows that points with uncrossed disparity appear behind the display and Fig. 1c shows that points with crossed disparity appear in front of the display. The magnitude of the separation of the homologous points, the distance to the observer, and the observer's interocular separation gives the amount of  
5 depth perceived on the display.

Stereoscopic type displays are well known in the prior art and refer to displays in which some kind of viewing aid is worn by the user to substantially separate the views sent to the left and right eyes. For example, the viewing aid may be colour filters in which the images are colour coded (e.g. red and green); polarising  
10 glasses in which the images are encoded in orthogonal polarisation states; or shutter glasses in which the views are encoded as a temporal sequence of images in synchronisation with the opening of the shutters of the glasses.

Autostereoscopic displays operate without viewing aids worn by the observer.  
In autostereoscopic displays, each of the views can be seen from a limited region in  
15 space as illustrated in Fig. 2.

Fig. 2a shows a display device 16 with an attached parallax optical element  
17. The display device produces a right eye image 18 for the right eye channel. The parallax optical element 17 directs light in a direction shown by the arrow 19 to produce a right eye viewing window 20 in the region in front of the display. An  
20 observer places their right eye 22 at the position of the window 20. The position of the left eye viewing window 24 is shown for reference. The viewing window 20 may also be referred to as a vertically extended optical pupil.

Fig. 2b shows the left eye optical system. The display device 16 produces a left eye image 26 for the left eye channel. The parallax optical element 17 directs  
25 light in a direction shown by the arrow 28 to produce a left eye viewing window 30 in the region in front of the display. An observer places their left eye 32 at the position of the window 30. The position of the right eye viewing window 20 is shown for reference.

The system comprises a display and an optical steering mechanism. The light  
30 from the left image 26 is sent to a limited region in front of the display, referred to as

the viewing window 30. If an eye 32 is placed at the position of the viewing window 30 then the observer sees the appropriate image 26 across the whole of the display 16. Similarly the optical system sends the light intended for the right image 18 to a separate window 20. If the observer places their right eye 22 in that window then the 5 right eye image will be seen across the whole of the display. Generally, the light from either image may be considered to have been optically steered (i.e. directed) into a respective directional distribution.

Fig. 3 shows in plan view a display device 16,17 in a display plane 34 producing the left eye viewing windows 36,37,38 and right eye viewing windows 10 39,40,41 in the window plane 42. The separation of the window plane from the display is termed the nominal viewing distance 43. The windows 37,40 in the central position with respect to the display are in the zeroth lobe 44. Windows 36,39 to the right of the zeroth lobe 44 are in the +1 lobe 46, while windows 38,41 to the left of the zeroth lobe are in the -1 lobe 48.

15 The viewing window plane of the display represents the distance from the display at which the lateral viewing freedom is greatest. For points away from the window plane, there is a diamond shaped autostereoscopic viewing zone, as illustrated in plan view in Fig. 3. As can be seen, the light from each of the points across the display is beamed in a cone of finite width to the viewing windows. The 20 width of the cone may be defined as the angular width.

If an eye is placed in each of a pair viewing zones such as 37,40 then an autostereoscopic image will be seen across the whole area of the display. To a first order, the longitudinal viewing freedom of the display is determined by the length of these viewing zones.

25 The variation in intensity 50 across the window plane of a display (constituting one tangible form of a directional distribution of the light) is shown with respect to position 51 for idealised windows in Fig. 4a. The right eye window position intensity distribution 52 corresponds to the window 41 in Fig. 3, and intensity distribution 53 corresponds to the window 37, intensity distribution 54 30 corresponds to the window 40 and intensity distribution 55 corresponds to the

window 36.

Fig. 4b shows the intensity distribution with position schematically for more realistic windows. The right eye window position intensity distribution 56 corresponds to the window 41 in Fig. 3, and intensity distribution 57 corresponds to the window 37, intensity distribution 58 corresponds to the window 40 and intensity distribution 59 corresponds to the window 36.

The optical system serves to generate a directional distribution of the illumination at a window plane at a defined distance from the display. The variation in intensity across the window plane of a display constitutes one tangible form of a directional distribution of the light.

The respective images are displayed at the display plane, and observed by an observer at or near the window plane. The variation in intensity across the window plane is not defined by the variation in intensity across the image; however the image seen by an observer at the window plane may be referred to as the image at the viewing window for ease of explanation.

In this application the term "SLM" (Spatial Light Modulator) is used to include devices which modulate the transmitted or reflected intensity of an external light source, examples of which include Liquid Crystal Displays, and also devices which generate light themselves, examples of which include Electroluminescent displays.

In this application the term "3D" is used to refer to a stereoscopic or autostereoscopic image in which different images are presented to each eye resulting in the sensation of depth being created in the brain. This should be understood to be distinct from "3D graphics" in which a 3D object is rendered on a 2D dimensional display and each eye sees the exact same image.

One type of prior art switchable 2D/3D display system uses a switchable backlight unit in order to achieve switching between different directional distributions as described in Proc.SPIE vol.1915 Stereoscopic Displays and Applications IV(1993) pp177-186, "Developments in Autostereoscopic Technology

the backlight is substantially uniform and a 2D directional distribution from the display is generated. In a second display mode, light lines are produced by the backlight. These light lines are modulated by LCD pixels so that the windows of an autostereoscopic intensity distribution for viewing a 3D image are formed. The  
5 switching could, for example, be accomplished by means of a switchable diffuser element, controlled by a voltage applied across the diffuser. Such diffusers are well known in the prior art.

It is known that increasing the number of pixel columns under each parallax component, such as the lens of a lenticular screen or the slit of a parallax barrier, will  
10 increase the number of viewing windows available for the user, and thus will enable a 'look-around' effect, and increase lateral viewing freedom. Considering Fig. 3, windows 39,36,40,37,41,38 may for example contain view data from views 1,2,3,4,5,6 respectively rather than repeating lobes of two views. Such an arrangement could be provided by 6 columns of pixels under each lens of a lens  
15 array.

One type of prior art pixel arrangement for autostereoscopic displays uses the well known stripe configuration as shown in Fig. 5 as used for standard 2D displays. This comprises columns of red pixels 1228, green pixels 1234 and blue pixels 1238. To generate an autostereoscopic display, a parallax element such as a lenticular array  
20 is aligned with pairs of colour sub-pixels as shown. Such a lens array 100 is shown in cross section while the pixels are shown in plan view for ease of explanation in the figures of this document. If a cylindrical lens array 100 is placed over the surface of this pixel configuration then each eye of the observer will see half of the horizontal pixels. This is illustrated in Fig. 5b for the right eye image comprising columns of  
25 red image pixels 102, blue image pixels 104 and image pixels green 106. In this case, the horizontal gap 108 between the pixels is substantially zero because the lenticular screen serves to distribute the light from the respective pixel across the whole of the aperture of the lens.

The use of colour pixels in a two view autostereoscopic display is shown in  
30 more detail in Fig. 6. The lens 1214 of the lens array 1208 serves to cover pixel

columns 1228 and 1234. The column 1228 contains red right eye data and the column 1234 contains green left eye data. The pixels 1222 are imaged to the right eye by the lens 1214 and appear to fill the aperture of lens 1214. In the adjacent lens 1216, the blue pixel column 1238 is imaged to the right eye and the red pixel column 5 1230 is imaged to the left eye. Similarly for the lens 1218 the green pixel column 1236 is imaged to the right eye and the blue pixel column 1240 is imaged to the left eye.

In the 2D mode, a colour pixel 1200 is made from adjacent colour sub-pixels 1202, 1204 and 1206. However, the 3D image colour pixel is formed from pixels that 10 have twice the spacing for example 1224, 1242 and 1207.

In this kind of two view spatially multiplexed autostereoscopic image, the horizontal pixel resolution of the stereoscopic image is half of the 2D horizontal pixel resolution.

The quality of the separation of images and the extent of the lateral and 15 longitudinal viewing freedom of the display is determined by the window quality, as illustrated in Fig. 4. Fig. 4a shows the ideal viewing windows while Fig. 4b is a schematic of the actual viewing windows that may be outputted from the display. Several artefacts can occur due to inadequate window performance. Cross talk occurs when light from the right eye image is seen by the left eye and vice versa. This is a 20 significant 3D image degradation mechanism which can lead to visual strain for the user. Additionally, poor window quality will lead to a reduction in the viewing freedom of the observer. One problem is the production of spatially derived artefacts as the viewer moves in front of the display. As the viewer moves past the windows, the variations in the total window intensity will be seen by the viewer as flicker of 25 the image being displayed.

One type of spatial light modulator for use with autostereoscopic display is described in EP-A-0,625,861. The pixels are aligned in a manner so that the columns of the pixels are substantially contiguous so as to provide uniform viewing windows when combined with a parallax element. Such a display disadvantageously suffers 30 from limited aperture ratio because the individual columns of contiguous pixels are

separated within a row.

EP-A-0,833,184 discloses another type of spatial light modulator in which the viewing windows have substantially uniform intensity when combined with a parallax element with power by means of the vertical gap between pixels being  
5 inclined so that the pixel apertures overlap along the rows and the pixel apertures being shaped so that total height of the pixels at each point along the rows of pixels is a constant.

However, in the case of an autostereoscopic display apparatus, it is necessary for some adjacent columns to show different images to be viewed by the two eyes of  
10 the viewer. A sharp transition between the windows showing different images is desirable to prevent cross-talk between the two images at the edges of the window. To achieve this it is desirable for the gaps between the columns of pixels to extend parallel to the columns of pixels, that is vertically. Minimising the width of such gaps is difficult to achieve, because such gaps are necessary for the routing of the  
15 electrical connections to the pixels. A narrow gap presents manufacturing difficulties. For example, small gaps are susceptible to errors in the colour filter manufacturing process causing the position of the gaps to vary, and colour filters to overlap or underlap. Also, the nature of the spatial light modulator may present a theoretical limit. For example, in the case of an LCD spatial light modulator the gaps cannot be  
20 substantially less than the thickness of the LCD cells to allow independent operation of adjacent pixels. Thus in practice the gaps must have a finite width and some spatially derived artefacts remain in a directional display apparatus.

The present invention relates to an autostereoscopic display apparatus comprising:

25 a spatial light modulator comprising an array of pixels arranged in rows and columns in a pixel plane, the pixels comprising pixel apertures having gaps therebetween with the gaps between the columns of pixels extending substantially parallel to the columns of pixels; and

a spatially multiplexing parallax element capable of directing light from  
30 successive columns of pixels towards successive ones of two or more viewing

windows in a nominal window plane.

In such an autostereoscopic display apparatus, it would be desirable to reduce spatially derived artefacts of the type described above.

According to a first aspect of the present invention, the pixel apertures are  
5 arranged so that the convolution across two adjacent columns in a direction  
perpendicular to the columns of:

(a) the intensity profile of an image of a nominal human pupil in the nominal window plane formed in the pixel plane by the spatially multiplexing parallax element and  
10 (b) the total height of the pixel apertures parallel to the columns of pixels varies by at most 5% of the maximum of the convolution.

According to a second aspect of the present invention, the pixel apertures repeat at a pitch equal to a representative width of said intensity profile.

According to a third aspect of the present invention, the total height of the  
15 pixel apertures parallel to the columns of pixels varies.

Thus in all the aspects of the present invention the arrangement of the pixels may be designed taking account of the image of a nominal human pupil in the nominal window plane formed in the pixel plane by the spatially multiplexing parallax element to reduce the amount of spatially derived artefact. In particular, the  
20 amount of flicker observed by a viewer moving across the window plane may be reduced or even eliminated. Thus the performance of the viewing windows may be optimised. This allows the viewing freedom of an autostereoscopic display apparatus to be increased.

As the gaps between columns extend parallel to the columns, the advantages  
25 mentioned above may be achieved without adverse effect on the cross talk of the images in adjacent windows or aperture ratio of the display.

The spatially multiplexing parallax element is preferably a lenticular array, but in general may be any suitable parallax element such as a parallax barrier or a holographic optical element. It may be a polarisation sensitive element in  
30 combination with a suitably polarised illumination source.

According to a fourth aspect of the present invention, there is provided an autostereoscopic display apparatus comprising:

a spatial light modulator comprising an array of pixels arranged in columns and rows, where vertical gaps are positioned between the pixel columns; and

5 a parallax element arranged to provide a vertically extended image of an observer's pupil at a plane of the spatial light modulator,

wherein the shape of the pixel apertures is determined by the horizontal convolution of the nominal profile of the illumination spot at the pixel plane such that the integrated intensity at the window plane is constant across at least a first 10 window boundary in the window plane.

Alternatively, the shape of at least one of the pixel sub-apertures may be nominally the shape of the intensity profile of the vertically extended illumination spot, such that the integrated intensity at the window plane is constant across at least a first window boundary in the window plane.

15 The spot size and shape of the parallax element optic may be fixed in manufacture to match the panel structure.

Different features of the first aspect of the invention may tend to provide the following advantages singly or in any combination.

20 Embodiments of the present invention will now be described, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Fig. 1a shows the generation of apparent depth in a 3D display for an object behind the screen plane;

Fig. 1b shows the generation of apparent depth in a 3D display for an object in front of the screen plane;

25 Fig. 1c shows the position of the corresponding homologous points on each image of a stereo pair of images;

Fig. 2a shows schematically the formation of the right eye viewing window in front of an autostereoscopic 3D display;

30 Fig. 2b shows schematically the formation of the left eye viewing window in front of an autostereoscopic 3D display;

Fig. 3 shows in plan view the generation of viewing zones from the output cones of a 3D display;

Fig. 4a shows the ideal window profile for an autostereoscopic display;

Fig. 4b shows a schematic of the output profile of viewing windows from an  
5 autostereoscopic 3D display;

Fig. 5a shows a prior art colour filter pattern;

Fig. 5b shows the appearance of Fig. 7a when used in conjunction with a two view parallax optic in the right eye of an observer;

10 Fig. 6 shows the arrangement of data on a two view lenticular display of the type shown in Fig. 7a;

Fig. 7 shows a switchable 2D/3D system;

Fig. 8 shows a 3D autostereoscopic display in which the directional distribution is switched by means of an electronically controlled polarisation switching element;

15 Fig. 9 shows a further 3D autostereoscopic display in which the directional distribution is switched by means of an electronically controlled polarisation switching element between a lens array and an output polariser;

20 Fig. 10 shows a further 3D autostereoscopic display in which the directional distribution is switched by means of an electronically controlled polarisation switching element between an output polariser and a lens array;

Fig. 11a shows the illumination of a standard RGB stripe panel by a cylindrical lens;

Fig. 11b shows the effect of a standard RGB stripe configuration on intensity variation in the window plane;

25 Fig. 12a shows the illumination of a panel comprising pixels with sub-regions;

Fig. 12b shows the effect of the structure of Fig. 12a on intensity variation in the window plane;

Fig. 13 shows an example configuration of the sub-pixel regions with half  
30 area green pixels;

Fig. 14 shows the illumination of pixels to compensate for gap regions;

Fig. 15 shows the structure of the pixels of Fig. 14;

Fig. 16 shows the an alternative pixel structure of the invention;

Fig. 17 shows the use of further sub-apertures to enhance the performance in  
5 the window plane.

Fig. 18 shows an example configuration of the sub-aperture regions with half area green pixels;

Fig. 19 shows an example configuration of the sub-aperture regions with RGB stripe pixel pattern;

10 Fig. 20 shows the appearance of illumination spots with chromatic aberration;

Fig. 21 shows the adjustment of pixel lobes in order to compensate for chromatic aberration;

Fig. 22 shows a transflective pixel arrangement of the invention; and

Fig. 23 shows the structure of a pixel of the invention.

15 First there will be described several different display apparatuses to which the pixel arrangement of the present invention may be applied. The pixel arrangement of the present invention may be applied to the display apparatuses described in WO-03/015,424, which is incorporated herein by reference. Some of those types of display apparatus will now be summarised, but further features of the display  
20 apparatuses are described in WO-03/015,424 and may be incorporated in display apparatuses in accordance with the present invention.

A type of 2D/3D switchable directional display device which is particularly suited for implementing the present invention will first be described with reference to Fig. 7 which shows one type of switchable directional display as described in WO-  
25 03/015,424.

A backlight 1034 produces an optical output 1036 which is incident on an input linear polariser 1038, and a LCD TFT substrate 1040. The light passes through the pixel plane 1042 comprising an array of LCD pixels 1044-1058. Each pixel comprises a separate region of addressable liquid crystal material, a colour filter and  
30 is surrounded by a black mask 1060 to form a pixel aperture 1062. The light then

passes through the LCD counter substrate 1064 and through a carrier substrate 1066 to fall on a birefringent microlens 1072 comprising a layer of birefringent material 1068 and an isotropic lens microstructure 1070. The light then passes through a lens substrate 1074 and a polarisation modifying device 1076.

5 Fig. 8 shows a further type of switchable directional display described in WO-03/015,424 in which the directional distribution is switched by means of a switchable polariser element. A backlight 1034 produces an optical output 1036 which is incident on an input linear polariser 1038, and a LCD TFT substrate 1040. The light passes through the pixel plane 1042 comprising an array of LCD pixels.

10 The light then passes through the LCD counter substrate 1064, an LCD output polariser 1414 and through a carrier substrate 1066 to fall on a birefringent microlens 1072 comprising a layer of birefringent material and an isotropic lens microstructure. The light then passes through a lens substrate 1074 and a polarisation modifying device 1416.

15 The polarisation modifying device 1416 may be embodied as for example a twisted nematic liquid crystal layer sandwiched between surfaces treated with transparent electrodes and liquid crystal alignment layers 1418 as well known in the art. A sensing device 1424 may be used to monitor the electrical driving of the polarisation switching layer 1416. The second substrate 1420 of the cell 1416, 1418

20 has a polariser 1422 attached to its second surface.

The polariser 1414 may be a linear polariser with a transmission direction aligned at 45 degrees to the birefringent optical axis of the microlens 1072. The birefringent axis of the microlens is the direction of the extraordinary axis of the birefringent material used in the birefringent microlens 1072. The polarisation state

25 incident on to the birefringent microlens will resolve on to the two axes of the birefringent material. In a first axis, the refractive index of the birefringent material is substantially index matched to the isotropic index of the birefringent microlens 1072 and so the lens has substantially no imaging function. In a second axis, which may be orthogonal to the first axis, the refractive index of the birefringent material has a

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30 different refractive index to the isotropic material and thus the lens has an imaging

function.

In a 2D mode of operation, no voltage is applied across the liquid crystal layer 1416, and an incident polarisation state is rotated. In a 3D mode of operation, a voltage is applied across the cell, and the incident polarisation state is substantially unrotated.

If the switch 1416 is set so that the polarisation state transmitted through the polariser 1422 is parallel to the first axis, then the display will have a 2D directional distribution. If the switch 1416 is set so that the polarisation state transmitted through the polariser 1422 is parallel to the second axis, then the display will have an autostereoscopic 3D directional distribution. The sensing device 1424 thus determines the display mode of the optical switching apparatus by determining the electrical driving of the polarising element.

Fig. 9 shows a further type of switchable directional display described in WO-03/015,424 in which the directional distribution is switched by means of a switchable polariser element. This is similar in structure to the architecture of Fig. 4 except that the polariser 1414 is omitted and the orientation of polarisation angles is different. Such a device operates in a similar way to the device of Fig. 3 except that the mechanically reconfigurable polariser is replaced by an electrically switched polariser 1416 which may be for example a twisted nematic liquid crystal layer sandwiched between surfaces 1418 comprising transparent electrodes and alignment layers and an absorbing linear polariser 1422.

As described for Fig. 8, the device may be switched between 2D and 3D directional distributions by selecting the polarisation state that is transmitted by the final polariser 1422.

Fig. 10 shows a further type of switchable directional display described in WO-03/015,424 in which the directional distribution is switched by means of a switchable polariser element positioned between a display output polariser and a birefringent microlens array 1072. The output linear polarisation of the display transmitted by polariser 1414 is transmitted through a switch substrate 1432, transparent electrodes and alignment layers 1418 sandwiching a twisted nematic

layer 1430, a lens counter substrate 1066, a birefringent microlens 1072 and a lens substrate 1074.

In the 2D mode, the polarisation switch 1430 rotates the incident polarisation so that it is incident on to the ordinary axis of the material in the birefringent 5 microlens. The ordinary index is matched to the index of the isotropic material and thus the lens has no effect. In the 3D mode, an electric field is applied to the liquid crystal layer 1430 so that the polarisation state is not rotated and the light is incident on the extraordinary axis of the birefringent microlens. The lens then has an optical effect which produces the autostereoscopic directional distribution.

10 The sensing device 1424 thus determines the display mode of the optical switching apparatus by determining the electrical driving of the polarising element.

Pixel arrangements in accordance with the present invention will now be described. Any of the following pixel arrangements may be applied to the arrangement of the pixels in the spatial light modulator in any of the types of display 15 apparatus described above. In general, the present invention may be applied to other types of spatial light modulator too.

In the pixel arrangements described below the pixels are arranged in arrays of rows and columns extending perpendicular to one another. The terms vertical and horizontal will be used to define the directions along the columns and rows, 20 respectively, but these terms should not be understood to limit the orientation of the display which may vary in use. The pixels comprise pixel apertures and gaps therebetween. In the pixel arrangements, the gaps between the columns extend substantially vertically, preferably exactly vertically, although in practice some variation could be allowed provided that the adjacent pixels do not overlap.

25 It is desirable that the intensity variation that occurs in the window plane as the observer moves is minimized, so as to avoid the display from appearing to flicker as the observer passes across a window boundary. For example, the final intensity profile of Fig. 4a in which there is substantially no gap between the windows is required rather than the intensity profile of Fig. 4b. The intensity fluctuation in the 30 window plane in a lenticular screen or parallax barrier display is determined by the

shape of the pixel, the optical characteristics of the lens or slit and the shape and size of the observer's pupil. As described in more detail below, it is possible to provide a window structure closer to that shown in Fig. 4a by providing appropriate pixel shapes and illumination of the spot at the pixel plane.

5 One method to reduce the visibility of the window boundaries is to use windows of size less than the nominal interocular separation of the observer. Thus, as one eye crosses a boundary, the other eye will be in a uniform area of the window, and the flicker artefact will only be in one eye, reducing the overall visibility.

Fig. 11a shows a prior art display in which a spot 500 which is the image of  
10 an observer's pupil in the nominal window plane when imaged through one lens 501 of a lenticular screen onto the pixel plane 502. The image 500 comprises a lateral intensity profile extending vertically generated by the lens element of a lenticular screen (comprising an array of vertically extending cylindrical lenses). The relative position of the peak intensity of the spot 500 is shown by the line 503. Generally the  
15 line 503 is parallel to the vertical columns of the pixels. In general, the shape and size of the spot 500 can be set by controlling the optical performance of the lens 501. The surface shape, lens materials and separation of the lens from the pixel plane may be adjusted to optimise the spot shape.

The pixel arrangements below are designed taking the shape of the spot 500  
20 into account. In practice this is straightforward to do and use of such a nominal pupil is routine in the field of optics. Typically the size of a human pupil shows little variation so any typical pupil size may be taken. For any given display apparatus there will be a nominal window plane, although in practice the depth of field will be sufficiently large that the precise distance of the nominal window plane from the  
25 display will not significantly change the design of the display apparatus.

Generally, the diameter of the human pupil varies in a range between approximately 4-7mm. The size of the pupil will be determined by the display brightness and ambient lighting conditions, but will generally be of the order of 5mm diameter for a display of brightness 200cd/m<sup>2</sup>. Such a pupil size may be considered  
30 appropriate for a nominal pupil size.

For a typical window size of 65mm and a 60 $\mu$ m pixel pitch, the 5mm pupil diameter represents a size of +/-2.3 $\mu$ m at a pixel plane. This is a small proportion of the total spot size which may for example be 20 $\mu$ m width (5-95%). As the pupil is round, but imaged to a line by the lenticular screen, then the energy is most tightly distributed in a region of less than +/-1 $\mu$ m. Thus, to a first order variations in the diameter of the pupil has a relatively small effect on the size of the illumination spot at the pixel plane as the width of the spot is dominated by the performance of the lens for a source substantially at infinity.

The pixel plane comprises an array of red pixel apertures 504, green pixel apertures 506, and blue 508 pixel apertures, surrounded by pixel gaps, for example black mask 510. The pitch of the lenticular screen 501 may be more than two colour sub-pixels, for example substantially the pitch of four pixels.

As the observer moves laterally, the spot 500 traverses the display surface in a direction shown by the arrow 512 so that the image seen by the observer moves across the respective pixel apertures. The optical quality of the autostereoscopic 3D image is determined by the quality of the spot 500 at the pixel plane. If the spot is sufficiently large, then the eye will see data from adjacent pixels and cross talk will be seen in the image.

For a moving observer moving across an array of ON pixels, the intensity variation shown in Fig. 11b will be seen in which the display intensity 514 is plotted against lateral position in the window plane 516, as determined by the convolution of the spot 500 with the pixel profile. In the regions 518 where the spot is in the centre of the pixel columns then the display brightness is maximised, whereas in the regions 520 where the spot falls over the gap between the pixels then the brightness is minimised. The observer sees the intensity variation 522 as a flicker of the display as they move, and it is the purpose of this invention to minimise the variation.

One means to minimise the intensity variation is to increase the size of the spot so that it covers several pixels. However, this serves to allow the observer to see light from adjacent pixels, and thus the display cross-talk will increase which is undesirable.

In this invention, a small spot size is maintained in order to minimise cross talk, while optimising window uniformity.

A first embodiment of the invention is shown in Fig. 12a. Each colour pixel 532 is divided into three apertures 526, 528 and 530, each separated by a vertically 5 extending gap 534. Each apertures 526, 528 and 530 has the same, constant vertical height and the same width. The apertures 526, 528 and 530 of each pixel 532 are commonly addressable.

To a first approximation, the spot 524 at the pixel plane may be taken to be a top-hat function having a width which is representative of the actual spot. For 10 example the width may be taken to be the width between the 5% and 95% cumulative integration points of the intensity profile of the actual spot. In the embodiment of Fig.12a, the pitch, namely the sum of the width of the aperture 526 and the width of the gap 534, is designed to be substantially the same as the width of the spot 524. As a result, the spot 524 always covers the same proportion of the pixel aperture 526 and 15 pixel gap 534, so the integrated intensity of the output will be the same, irrespective of spot position, as shown in Fig. 12b. In other words, the convolution of the spot 524 with the height of the pixel apertures, which is the intensity seen by the eye at any given position, remains constant.

In one example, a TFT-LCD display with colour sub-pixel pitch of 60 $\mu$ m is 20 used with a horizontal gap of 15 $\mu$ m. To avoid cross talk, and maximise viewing freedom, a spot width of 20 $\mu$ m diameter (5-95% energy) is selected by the design and construction of the lens. The pixel 532 is then divided into three equal apertures 526, 528 and 530 of width 15 $\mu$ m, separated by gaps 534 of 5 $\mu$ m width. Each of the three apertures is addressed by the same data signal, and comprises a uniformly 25 switched liquid crystal cell, and the same colour filter. The sub-gaps may be defined by the black mask layer, which may be formed on the counter substrate of the display device.

Fig. 13 shows another embodiment of the invention using the pixels configuration incorporating an additional magenta pixel and half size green pixels as 30 described in a co-pending application filed on the same day as this application (J.A.

Kemp & Co. Ref: N.89125). The red and blue colour components are formed in a first row 540, and the green components are formed in a second row 542. The pixels are divided in to column groups 532 comprising red and green, blue and green or magenta and green column data. The use of the additional row of green pixels means  
5 that the pixel width can be increased for the same lateral 3D luminance pitch. This advantageously allows a larger separation between the pixel plane and the lenses, and gives more flexibility for spot design. Advantageously, the larger pixel pitch means that the gap width 543 may be smaller as a proportion of the total pixel width due to the finite size of electrodes required to address the panel pixels. In this example, the  
10 pixels are shown as having a single gap per pixel.

In TFT-LCDs, the gaps between the pixels are determined by the width of the source electrodes, and size of addressing electronics such as thin film transistors and storage capacitors. In this invention, it is desirable (but not necessary) that the sub-gaps do not substantially reduce the aperture ratio of the panel further than that  
15 required by the addressing electronics. It may be possible to split the source electrode into two equal width electrodes. However, this may increase the resistance of the panel electrodes, which may be undesirable. Alternatively, it may be possible to incorporate the storage capacitor along the additional gaps while maintaining the width of the source electrodes. In this way, the vertical aperture ratio of the display  
20 may be increased, thus retaining display aperture ratio.

In practice, the optical spot will not be an ideal top-hat function so that small residual intensity fluctuations may exist between the windows in the window plane. The sources of degradation of the top-hat will be due to diffraction in the lens aperture, scatter from optical surfaces, the image of the observer's round pupil and  
25 chromatic aberration. To remove diffraction effects, it may be possible to apodize the diffractive lens aperture, by means of incorporating additional diffractive components. Diffractive components may be incorporated in to the refractive structure of the lens.

Transverse chromatic aberrations arise from dispersion effects in the lens materials, and may be compensated by suitable choice of materials used to fabricate

the lens structure, particularly in the case of birefringent lenses formed against an isotropic medium. Further diffractive correction of chromatic aberrations may be incorporated, for example in to the refractive lens surface.

The spot produced by the lens can be optimised during manufacture, for  
5 example by using a UV curable lens with a refractive index which varies dependent on cure temperature. UV curable birefringent materials are known in the art. If the lens is appropriately positioned with respect to the pixel aperture, or a test pixel aperture so that the intensity fluctuations in the far field can be measured, then the optimum cure temperature can be established to minimise the intensity fluctuations  
10 in the window plane.

In the above described pixel arrangements each pixel has a constant vertical height across its horizontal width and the pitch of the pixels is designed taking into account the width of the spot. In the following pixel arrangements, the height of the pixel apertures is designed taking into account the shape of the spot.

15 Fig. 14 shows a spot 544 falling on a pixel plane, with translation 512 of the spot across the pixel plane for a moving observer in the window plane. Pixel apertures 546 of the invention, separated by gaps 547 are shown. As shown in detail in Fig. 15, the pixel aperture is divided in to substantially rectangular aperture regions 548 and further aperture regions 550. Gap regions 551 and 549 are also  
20 marked. The purpose of the aperture regions 550 is to provide additional luminance in the window plane when the spot is in the region of the gap 551. Thus the overall profile of the vertical height of the pixel aperture 546 is flat in a central portion and increases towards the edges.

For a single parallax device, the vertical extent of the aperture regions 550 is  
25 set so that the integrated intensity under the spot 544 when spot position 503 is at the centre of the gap is the same as the vertical integrated intensity for the spot position 503 when in the centre of the pixel. In other words, the horizontal convolution of the spot 544 with the vertical height of the pixel aperture 546, which represents the intensity seen by the observer's eye, is constant at all horizontal positions. Thus, in  
30 the aperture regions 550, extra vertically extended pixel area is allocated compared to

the centre of the pixel.

As the spot moves away from the centre of the gap, the additional intensity required falls, with the profile of the falling intensity substantially the same as the profile of the spot convolved with a square spot. Thus the regions have substantially  
5 the same profile as the optical spot 544 at the pixel plane. In this way, the appearance of the gaps can be eliminated. Advantageously, the gap region 551 does not need to be adjusted to compensate.

Fig. 16 shows an alternative embodiment of the invention in which a single gap region 549 is used per pixel, with two aperture regions 550. The total integrated  
10 intensity of the regions 550 is the same as for Fig. 15, so that the sub-apertures are larger in extent in this embodiment.

The vertical extent of the aperture regions 550 may limit the vertical aperture ratio of the panel. The limit on vertical extent may be reduced by using further gap regions as shown in Fig. 17. In this case, the gap 551 of Fig. 15 is replaced by two  
15 gaps 553 and 555 of the pixel so that the intensity variation produced by the gap 551 is reduced. This results in a smaller area of the aperture 550, and a larger aperture 548. The vertical aperture ratio is thus increased. The use of additional gaps will result in further uniformity of the window boundary, particularly if the aperture and gap width is substantially equal to the spot width.

20 The pixels may be arranged for example in RBMGGG configurations as shown in Fig. 18 in which rows 554 of red, blue and magenta pixels are interleaved with rows 556 of green pixels. Alternatively, the pixels may be arranged in other configurations such as the rows 558 of RGB stripe pixels as shown in Fig. 19.

In practice, the spot shape may include chromatic aberration effects, in which  
25 the size of the red spots 562, green spots 560 and blue spots 564 are different, as shown in Fig. 20. In this case, the convolution of the spot with the pixel boundary may be different for each coloured spot. The pixel apertures 550 may be compensated separately for red pixels 568, green pixels 566 and blue pixels 570 by changing the width and/or height of the sub-aperture as shown for example in Fig.

30 21. Similarly in the embodiments shown in Figs. 12 and 13, the same effect may be

achieved by varying the horizontal width or vertical height of the sub-apertures 526, 528 and 530. In particular, the sub-apertures 526, 528 and 530 will be the same for each colour but different for different colours.

Fig. 22 shows a transreflective display embodiment of the invention. The sub-  
5 pixel comprises transmissive pixel aperture 572 comprising aperture regions 550 to compensate for gap regions 551. Additional reflective pixel apertures 574 comprising aperture regions 576 are incorporated. Reflective pixels facilitate the routing of electrodes under the pixel aperture, and so the gap 578 may be smaller than the gap 551. The regions 576 are adjusted to compensate for the different gap width. As  
10 described previously, additional gaps may be used to divide the gap into smaller portions.

Fig. 23a shows a further embodiment of the invention in which the gaps between the pixel columns 586 may be reduced by means of a diagonally extending electrode 580. A cut-out region 582 is incorporated to compensate for the diagonal  
15 electrode aperture. Sub-aperture regions 550 are incorporated to cooperate with the illumination spot to cancel the sub-pixel gaps 584 and 586. The sub-pixel has sub-aperture regions 588 and 590. The pixel shape with construction lines removed is shown in Fig. 23b for clarity.

In this way, these pixel arrangements allow the generation of uniform  
20 intensity across at least two windows in the window plane of an autostereoscopic 3D display. This can advantageously be used to extend the viewing freedom of the display while reducing or removing display flicker. The windows may contain different view data, or adjacent windows may contain the same view data and be used in cooperation with an observer position measurement sensor so that the viewer  
25 sees a stereoscopic 3D image for an extended range of viewing positions.

The pixel arrangements have been described above as providing a constant intensity as the observer's eye moves across the window plane. In practice, some variation may actually remain. Nonetheless the pixel arrangements can be used to reduce that variation. In practice, a typical variation in the convolution described  
30 above for a pixel arrangement of the known type shown in Fig. 11a will be of the

order of 10%. The present invention allows a reduction to 5% and below.

A minimum useful window size may be 25% of total window pitch; for example 16mm lateral freedom for a 65mm window pitch. To maintain a comfortable level of cross talk (for example 5% or below) over this viewing freedom  
5 for an observer moving within a single window it is desirable that the nominal spot width is less than 75% of the pixel pitch, and preferably less than 50% of the pixel pitch.

In an example prior art display system in which the pixel pitch is 60 $\mu$ m, with a 15 $\mu$ m gap between the pixels, the maximum spot width that can be used before  
10 substantial levels of cross talk are produced over a useful lateral viewing freedom is of the order of 45 $\mu$ m. Assuming a substantially top hat spot function, the maximum convoluted intensity produced will be 45 units, and the minimum convoluted intensity will be 30 units. The variation of the convoluted spot intensity compared to the maximum intensity is thus at best 33%. One measured display system  
15 constructed has a viewing freedom of greater than 30mm for cross talk of less than 5% and intensity variations of greater than 40%.

In another example using 60 $\mu$ m pixel pitch, for a gap width limited by liquid crystal cell thickness of 5 $\mu$ m, the maximum intensity is 45 units and the minimum intensity will be 40 units. The variations of the convoluted spot intensity compared  
20 to the maximum intensity is thus 11%. In fact, the spot will not be a perfect top hat function, so that the variation will be larger than this.

In order to reduce the intensity variation, prior art systems are required to increase the spot size, so that the cross talk will increase and the viewing freedom will reduce below a useful level.

25 Thus, 10% is considered the best variation of the convoluted spot intensity compared to the maximum intensity that the prior art systems can achieve while maintaining adequate viewing freedom.

The pixel shapes of this invention advantageously allow a smaller nominal spot size to be used thus increasing viewing freedom and reducing cross talk while  
30 reducing the variation of viewing window visibility for an observer moving in the

window plane. Vertically extending gaps between columns allow further reduction of the area of cross talk for the case in which the illuminating spot is close to the boundary between the pixels.

Claims

1. An autostereoscopic display apparatus comprising:
  - a spatial light modulator comprising an array of pixels arranged in rows and columns in a pixel plane, the pixels comprising pixel apertures having gaps therebetween with the gaps between the columns of pixels extending substantially parallel to the columns of pixels; and
    - a spatially multiplexing parallax element capable of directing light from successive columns of pixels towards successive ones of two or more viewing windows in a nominal window plane,
      - wherein the pixel apertures are arranged so that across two adjacent columns the convolution in a direction perpendicular to the columns of:
        - (a) the intensity profile of an image of a nominal human pupil in the nominal window plane formed in the pixel plane by the spatially multiplexing parallax element and
        - (b) the total height of the pixel apertures parallel to the columns of pixels varies by at most 5% of the maximum of the convolution.
  2. A display apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the pixel apertures repeat at a pitch substantially equal to a representative width of said intensity profile.
  3. A display apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the pixel apertures of pixels of each colour have substantially the same, constant total height parallel to the columns of pixels.
  4. A display apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the pixel apertures of pixels of different colours have substantially the same total height parallel to the columns of pixels.
  - 30 5. A display apparatus according to any one of claims 2 to 4, wherein the pixel

apertures of pixels of each colour have substantially the same width perpendicular to the columns.

6. A display apparatus according to claim 5, wherein the pixel apertures of  
5 pixels of different colours have substantially the same width.
7. A display apparatus according to claim 5, wherein the pixel apertures of pixels of different colours have different widths to compensate for chromatic aberration.  
10
8. A display apparatus according to any one of claims 2 to 7, wherein along the rows of pixels, the pixels are arranged in groups consisting of a plurality of adjacent pixels of the same colour.
- 15 9. A display apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the pixels of each group are commonly addressable.
10. A display apparatus according to any one of claims 2 to 9, wherein said representative width is the width between the 5% and 95% cumulative integration  
20 points of said intensity profile.
11. A display apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the total height of the pixel apertures parallel to the columns of pixels varies.
- 25 12. A display apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the total height of the pixel apertures parallel to the columns of pixels has a profile which increases towards the edges of the pixel apertures relative to the centre of the pixel apertures.
13. A display apparatus according to claim 12, wherein the total height of the  
30 pixel apertures parallel to the columns of pixels has a profile which has a flat central

portion.

14. A display apparatus according to any one of claims 11 to 13, wherein a representative width of said intensity profile is at most 75% of the pitch of the  
5 columns.

15. A display apparatus according to claim 14, wherein said representative width is the width between the 5% and 95% cumulative integration points of said intensity profile.

10

16. An autostereoscopic display apparatus comprising:  
a spatial light modulator comprising an array of pixels arranged in rows and columns in a pixel plane, the pixels comprising pixel apertures having gaps therebetween with the gaps between the columns of pixels extending substantially  
15 parallel to the columns of pixels; and  
a spatially multiplexing parallax element capable of directing light from successive columns of pixels towards successive ones of two or more viewing windows in a nominal window plane,  
wherein the pixel apertures repeat at a pitch equal to a representative width of  
20 said intensity profile.

17. A display apparatus according to claim 16, wherein the pixel apertures of pixels of each colour have substantially the same, constant total height parallel to the columns of pixels.

25

18. A display apparatus according to claim 17, wherein the pixel apertures of pixels of different colours have substantially the same total height parallel to the columns of pixels.

30 19. A display apparatus according to any one of claims 16 to 18, wherein the

pixel apertures of pixels of each colour have substantially the same width perpendicular to the columns.

20. A display apparatus according to claim 19, wherein the pixel apertures of  
5 pixels of different colours have substantially the same width.

21. A display apparatus according to claim 19, wherein the pixel apertures of pixels of different colours have different widths to compensate for chromatic aberration.

10 22. A display apparatus according to any one of claims 16 to 21, wherein along the rows of pixels, the pixels are arranged in groups consisting of a plurality of adjacent pixels of the same colour.

15 23. A display apparatus according to claim 22, wherein the pixels of each group are commonly addressable.

24. A display apparatus according to any one of claims 16 to 23, wherein said representative width is the width between the 5% and 95% cumulative integration  
20 points of said intensity profile.

25. An autostereoscopic display apparatus comprising:  
a spatial light modulator comprising an array of pixels arranged in rows and columns in a pixel plane, the pixels comprising pixel apertures having gaps therebetween with the gaps between the columns of pixels extending substantially parallel to the columns of pixels; and  
a spatially multiplexing parallax element capable of directing light from successive columns of pixels towards successive ones of two or more viewing windows in a nominal window plane,  
30 wherein the total height of the pixel apertures parallel to the columns of

pixels varies.

26. A display apparatus according to claim 25, wherein the total height of the pixel apertures parallel to the columns of pixels has a profile which increases towards 5 the edges of the pixel apertures relative to the centre of the pixel apertures.

27. A display apparatus according to claim 26, wherein the total height of the pixel apertures parallel to the columns of pixels has a profile which has a flat central portion.

10 28. A display apparatus according to any one of claims 25 to 27, wherein a representative width of the intensity profile of an image of a nominal human pupil in the nominal window plane formed in the pixel plane by the spatially multiplexing parallax element is at most 75% of the pitch of the columns.

15 29. A display apparatus according to claim 28, wherein said representative width is the width between the 5% and 95% cumulative integration points of said intensity profile.

20 30. A display apparatus according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the rows and columns are perpendicular to each other.

31. A display apparatus according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the display apparatus is switchable between a first mode in which the spatially 25 multiplexing parallax element is effective to direct light from successive columns of pixels towards an alternate one of two viewing windows and a second mode in which the spatially multiplexing parallax element has no effect.

32. A display apparatus according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein 30 the spatially multiplexing parallax element has a structure which is uniform in a

direction parallel to the columns of pixels and which repeats in a direction parallel to the rows of pixels.

33. A display apparatus according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein  
5 the spatially multiplexing parallax element is a lenticular array.

34. A display apparatus according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein  
the spatially multiplexing parallax element has a structure which repeats at a pitch  
which is substantially an integer multiple of the pitch of the columns of the array of  
10 pixels.

Abstract

Pixel Arrangement For An Autostereoscopic Display Apparatus

An autostereoscopic display apparatus comprises a spatial light modulator comprising an array of pixels arranged in rows and columns in a pixel plane, and a  
5 spatially multiplexing parallax element capable of directing light from successive columns of pixels towards successive ones of two or more viewing windows in a nominal window plane. The pixels comprise pixel apertures having gaps therebetween with the gaps between the columns of pixels extending substantially parallel to the columns of pixels. The arrangement of the pixels is designed taking  
10 account of the intensity profile of an image of a nominal human pupil in the nominal window plane formed in the pixel plane by the spatially multiplexing parallax element to reduce the amount of spatially derived flicker observed by a viewer moving in the window plane. In one arrangement, the pixel apertures repeat at a pitch equal to a representative width of said intensity profile. In another arrangement, the  
15 total height of the pixel apertures parallel to the columns of pixels has a profile which increases towards the edges of the pixel apertures relative to the centre of the pixel apertures.

Fig. 14

1/9

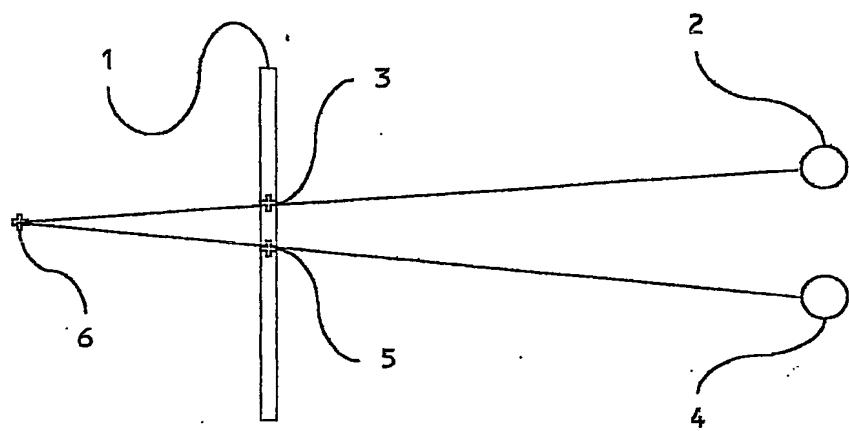


FIG. 1a

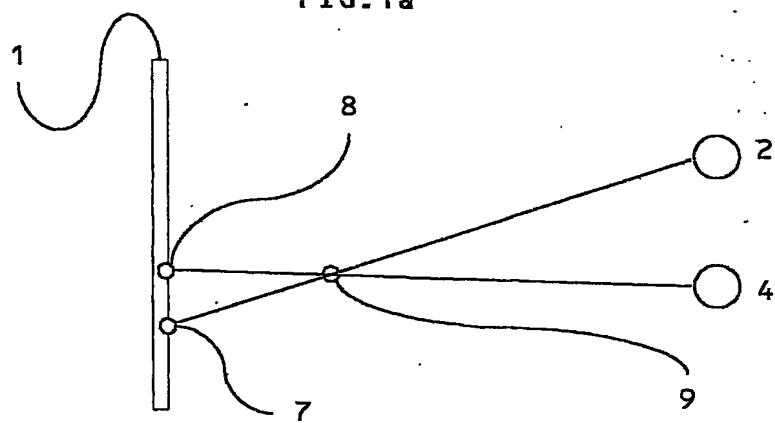


FIG. 1b

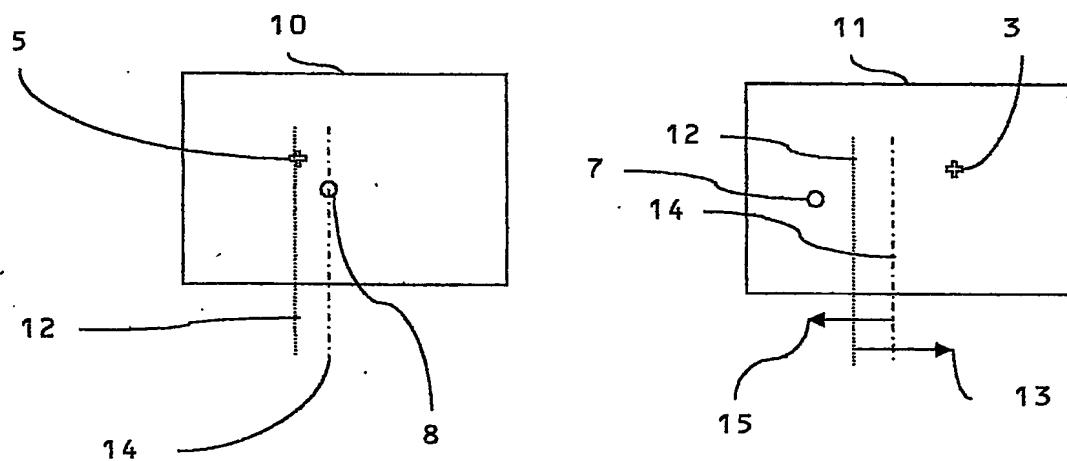
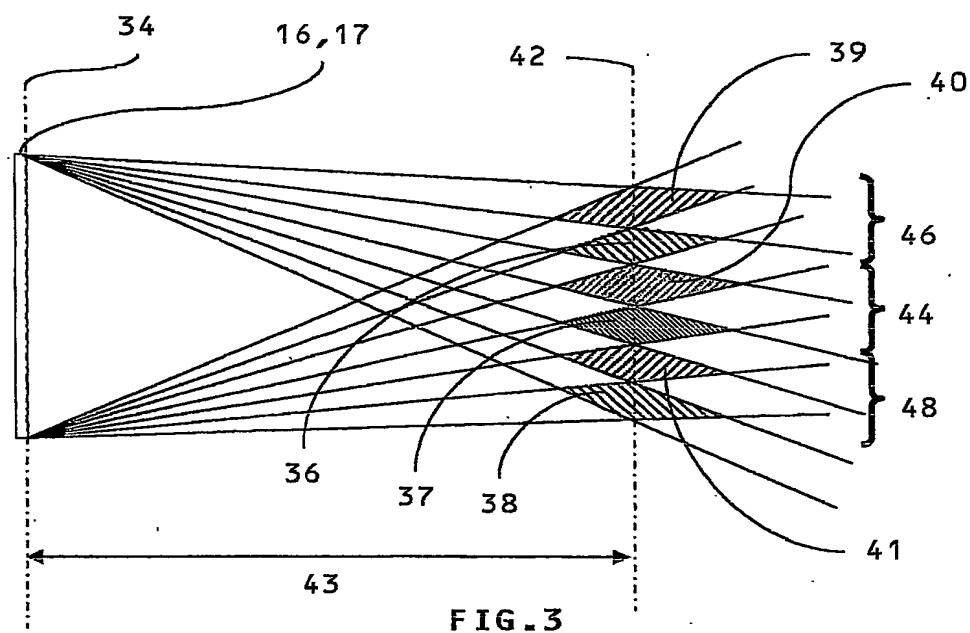
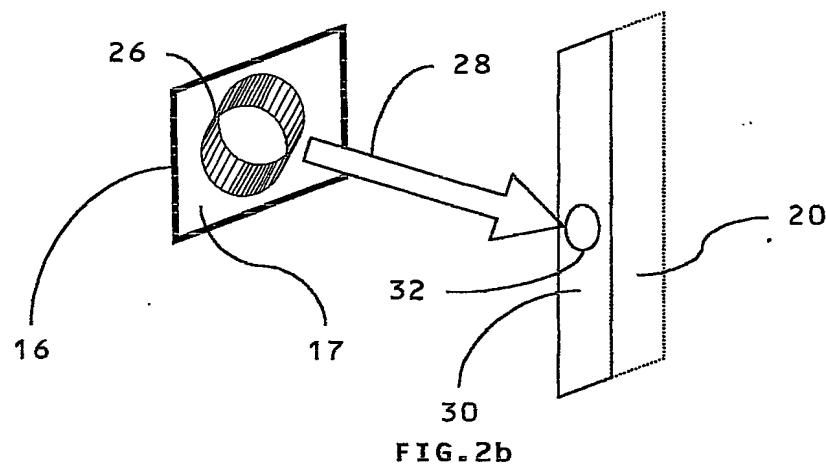
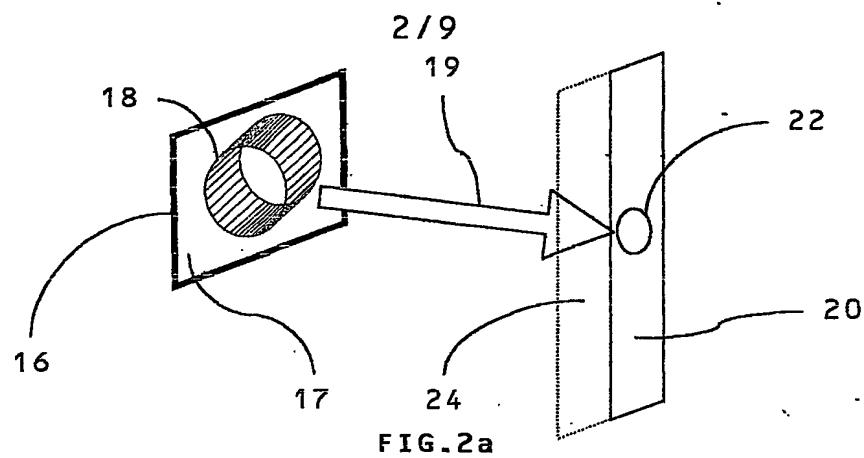


FIG. 1c

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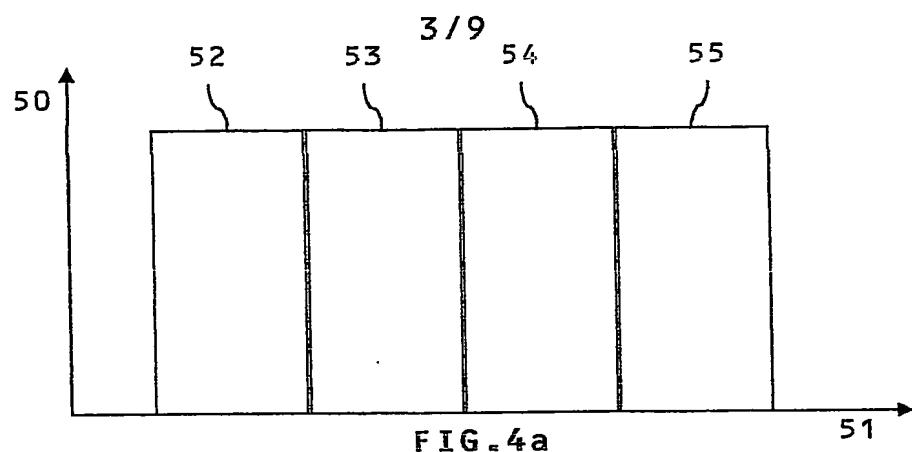


FIG. 4a

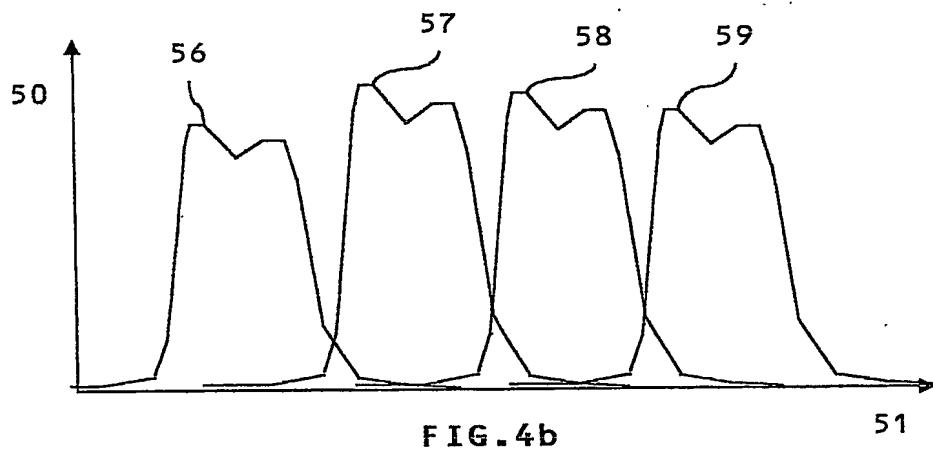


FIG. 4b

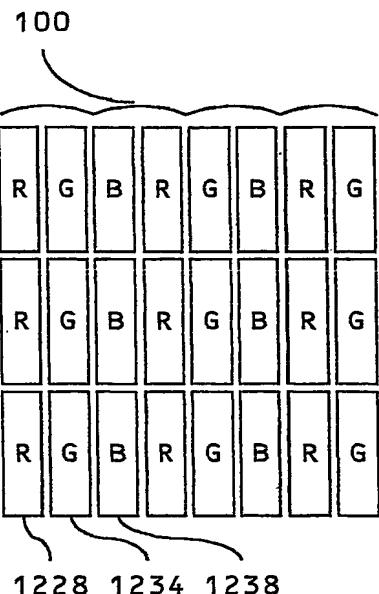


FIG. 5a

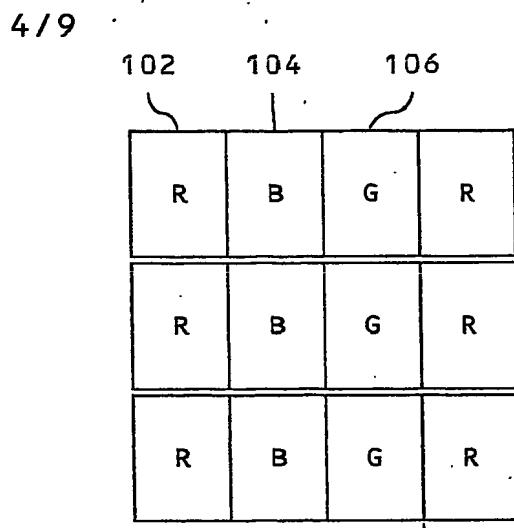


FIG. 5b

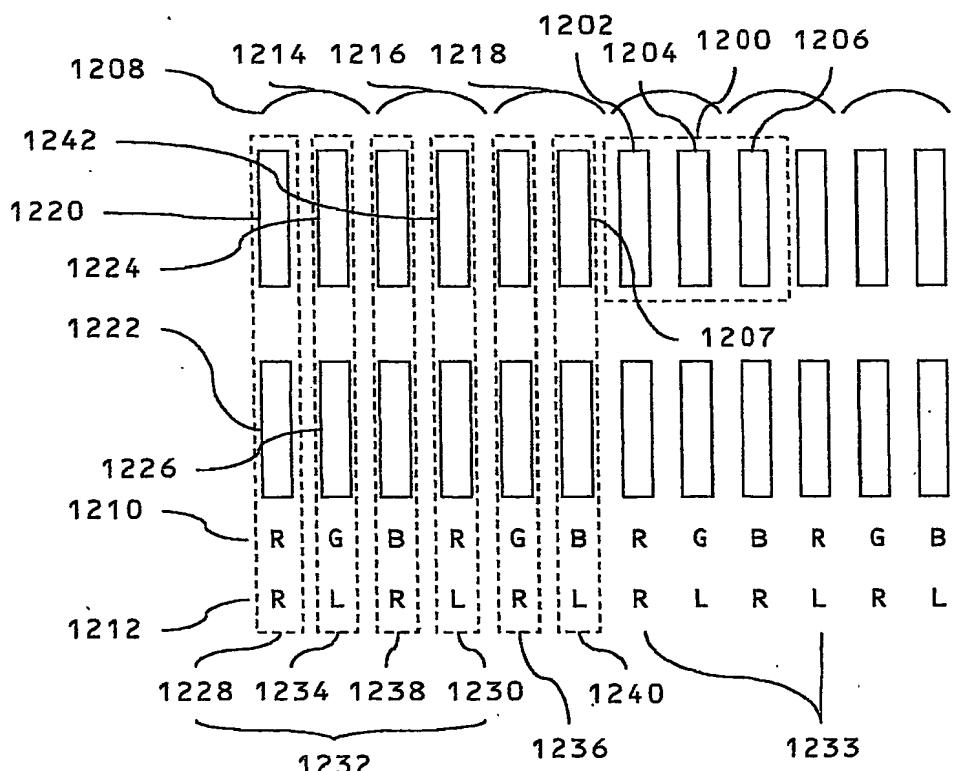


FIG. 6

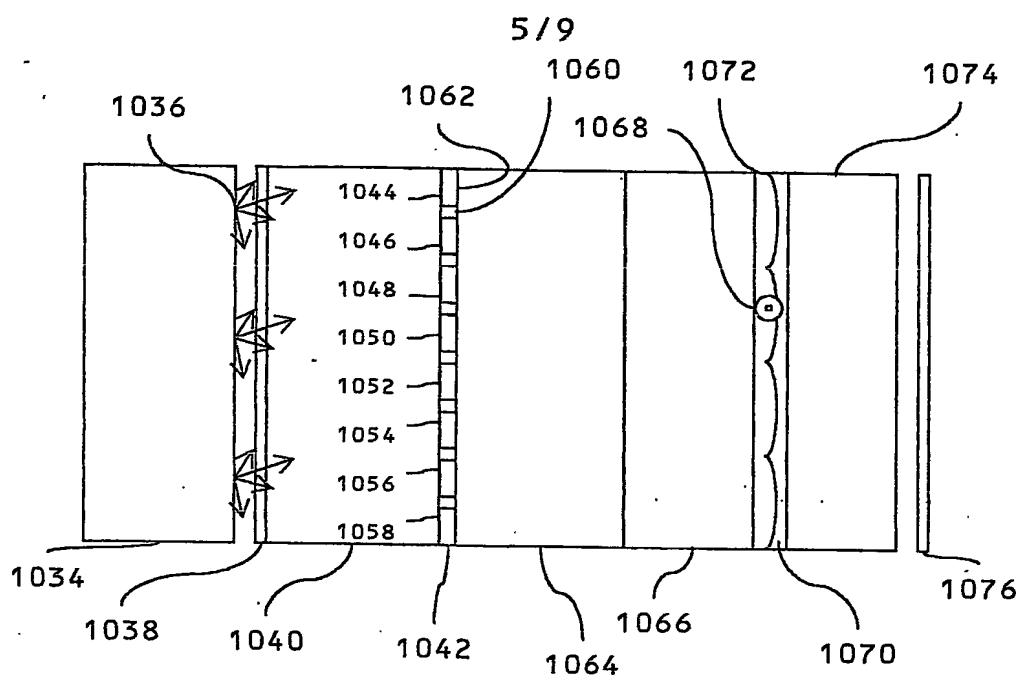


FIG. 7

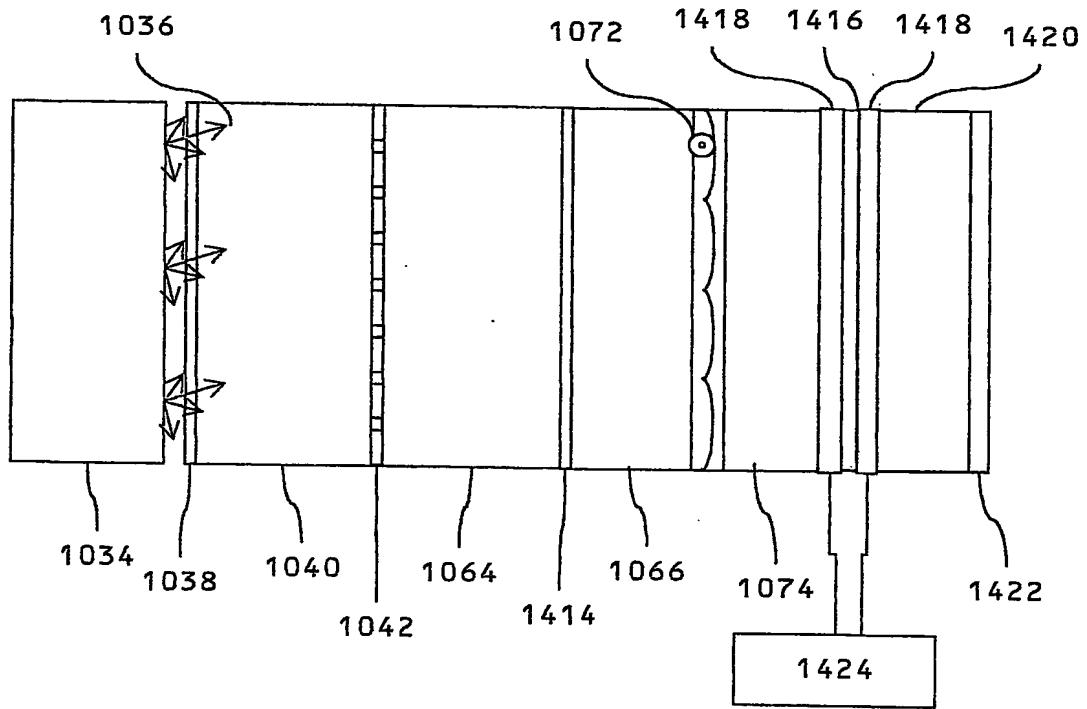
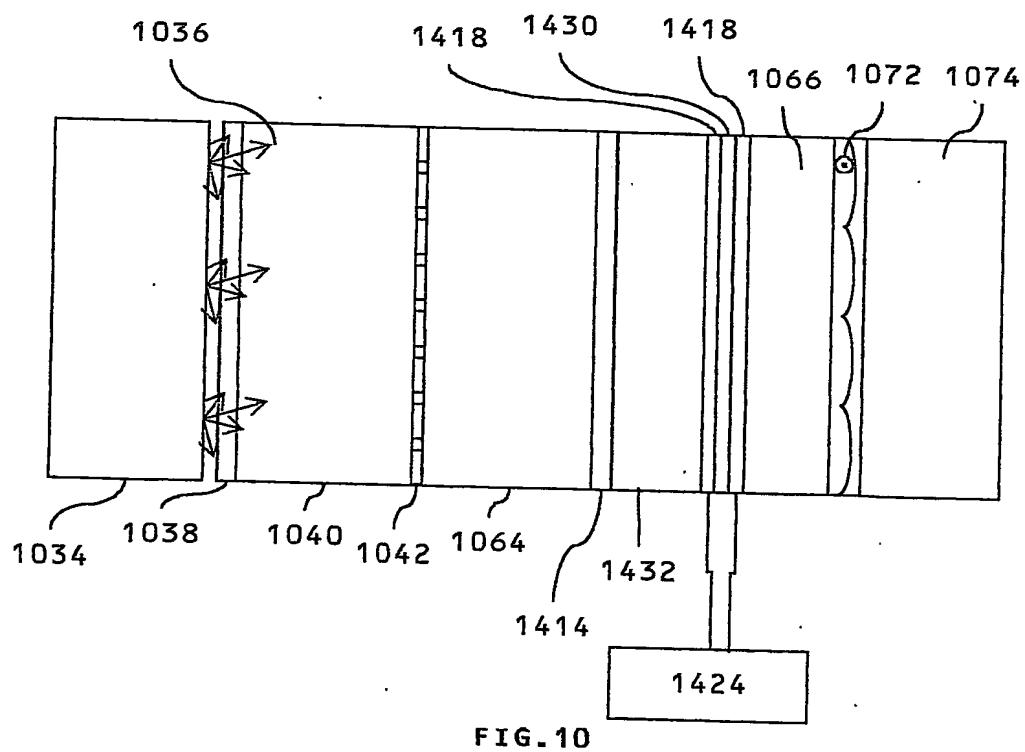
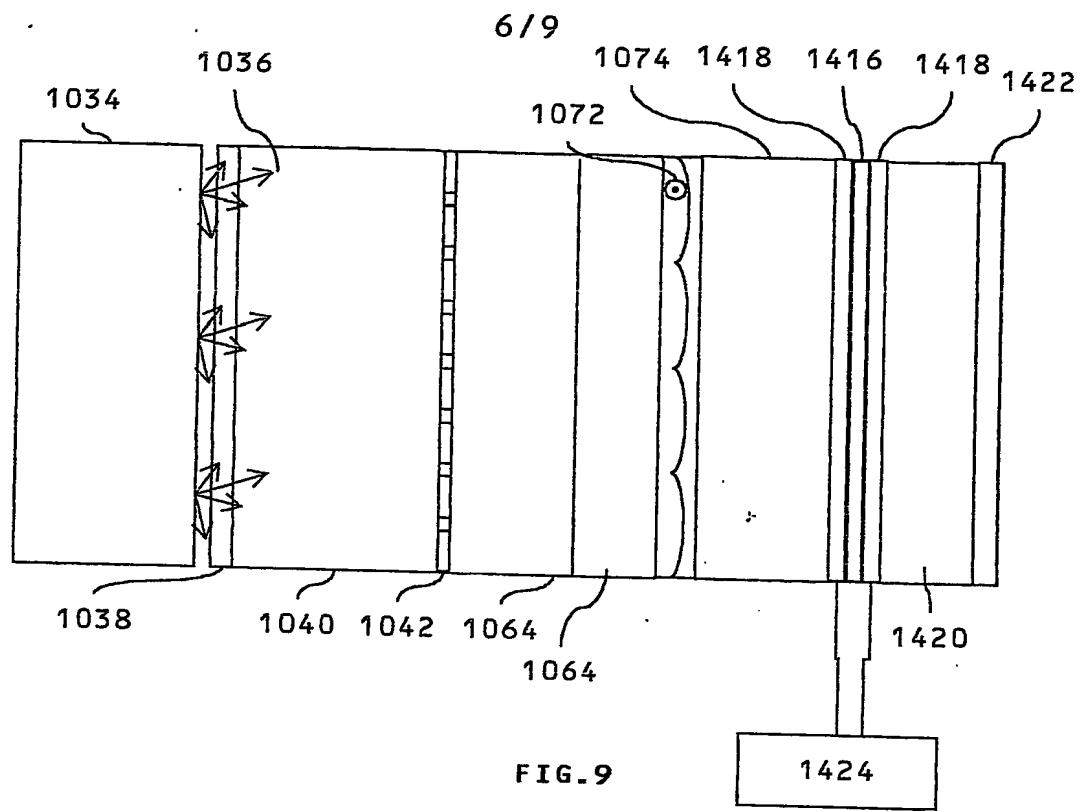


FIG. 8



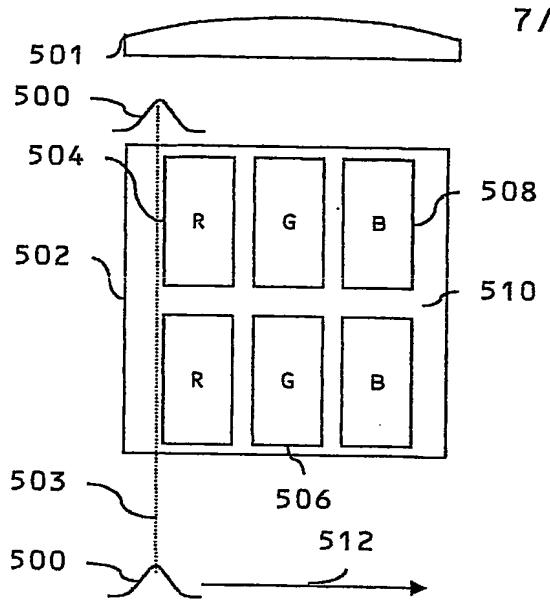


FIG. 11a

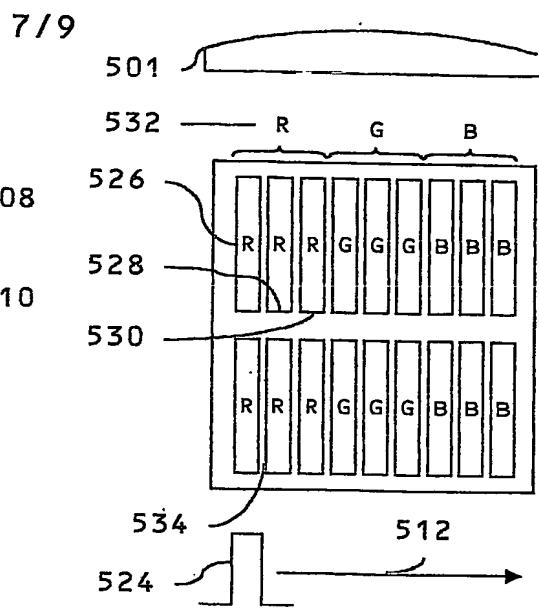


FIG. 12a

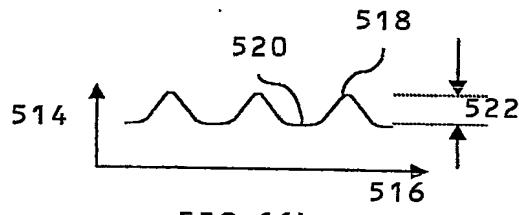


FIG. 11b

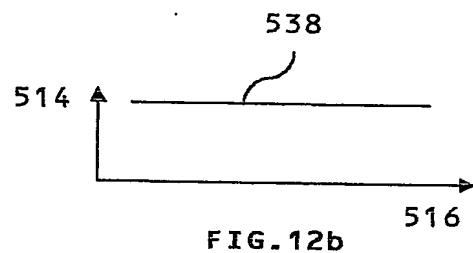


FIG. 12b

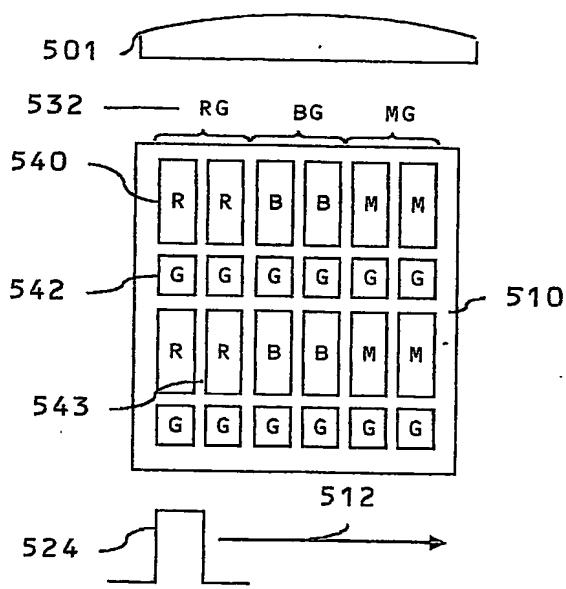
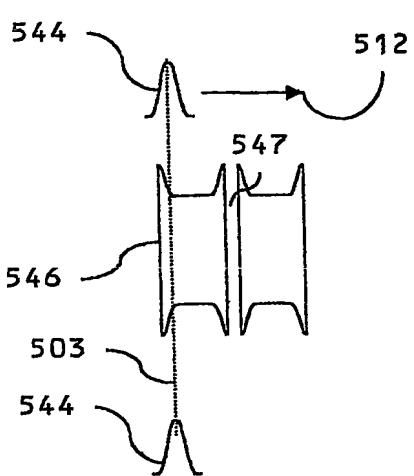
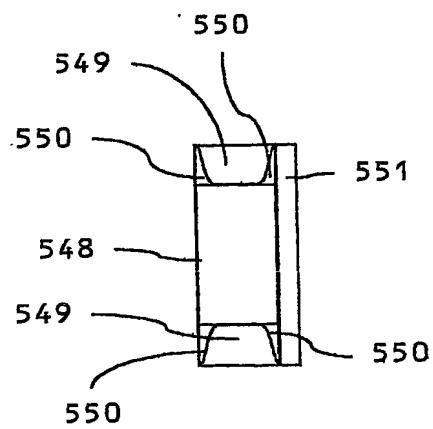


FIG. 13

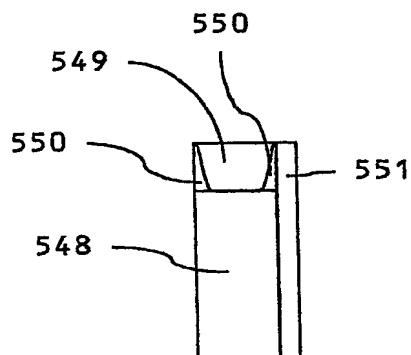


**FIG. 14**

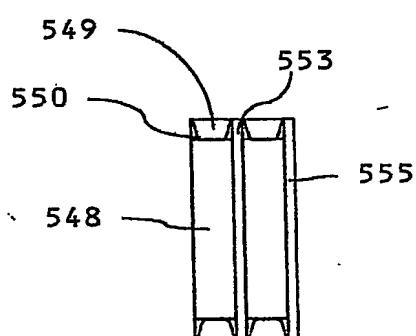
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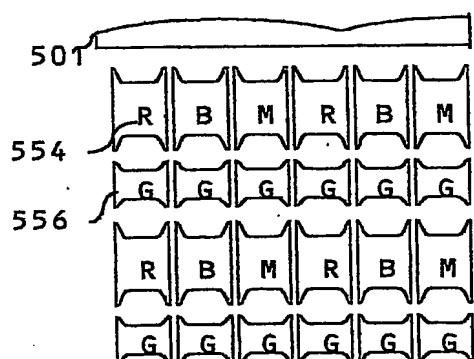
**FIG. 15**



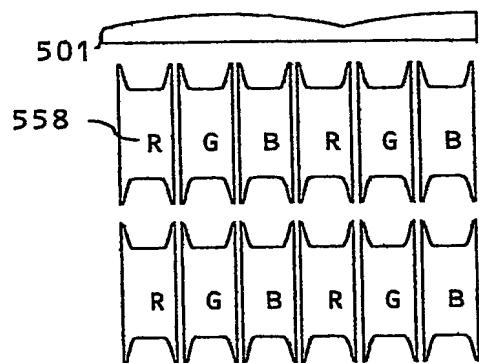
**FIG. 16**



**FIG. 17**



**FIG. 18**



**FIG. 19**

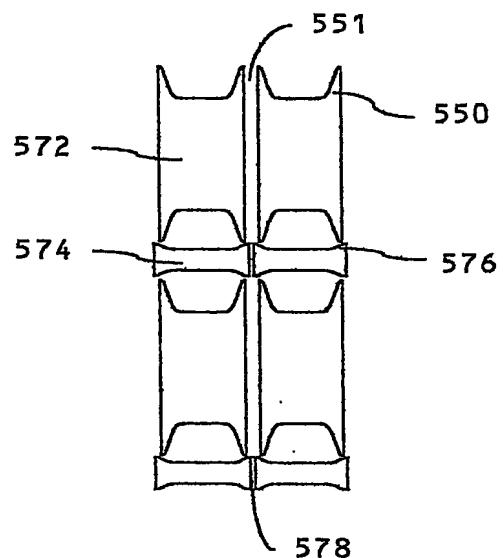
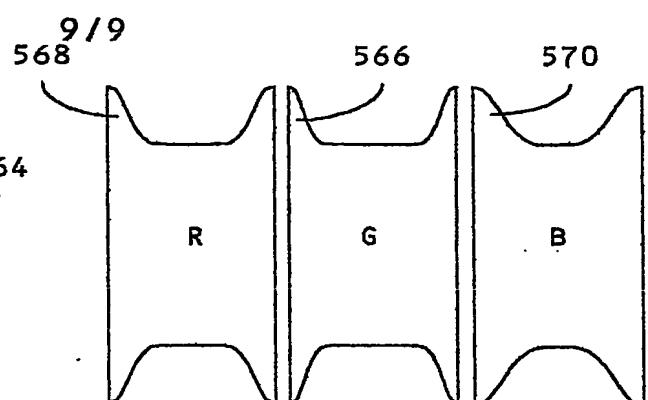
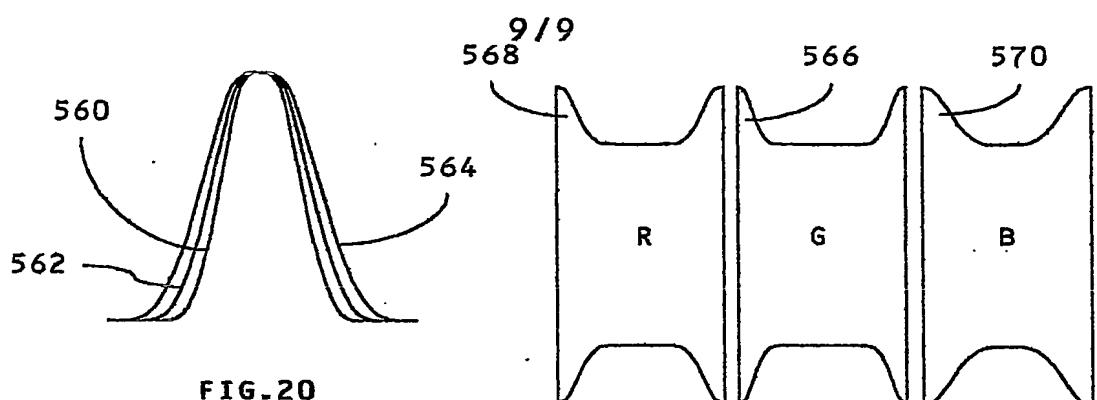
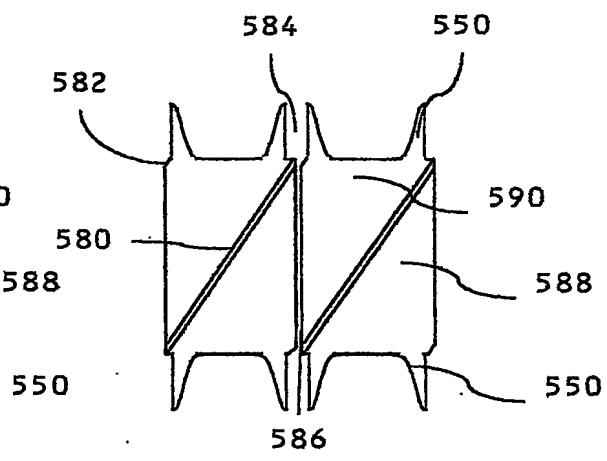
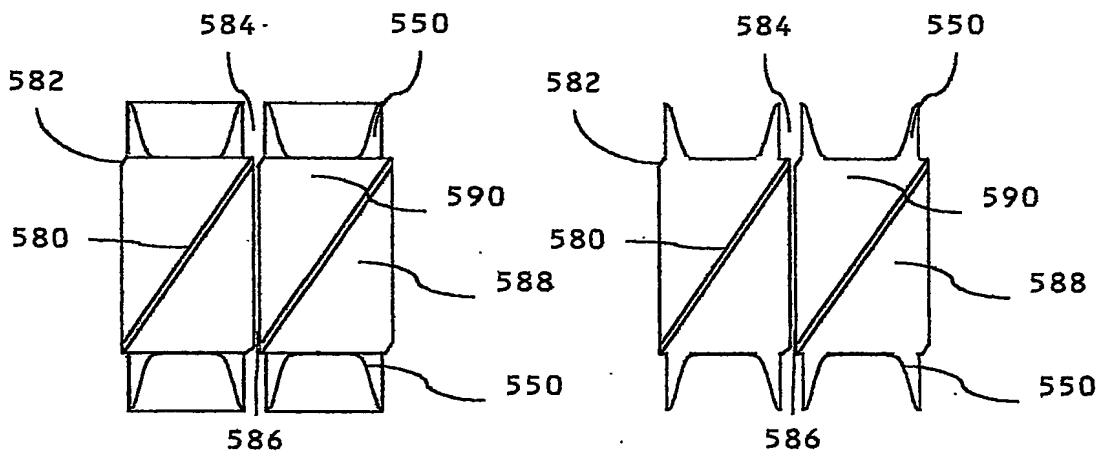


FIG. 22



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